

Fort Dix supports Hiring Heroes Workshop and Career Fair

By Shawn Morris

Fort Dix Public Affairs Staff

When citizens volunteer to be Soldiers, they swear a solemn oath to place themselves in harm's way for the welfare of their country. Such is the reality of life in the military, a reality recognized and shared by all who wear the uniform.

But a nation must also live up to its obligations, never forgetting those warriors who return from conflict bearing the scars of battle.

To this end, Fort Dix and the Installation Management Agency hosted the Hiring Heroes Technical Workshop and Career Fair Feb. 27-28 at the recently renovated Timmermann Conference Center.

"There's nothing more important than taking care of those who have taken care of us," Col. David McNeil, installation commander, told Soldiers attending the event during the opening session.

The two-day, Department of Defense-run event offered service members who were wounded in the Global War on Terrorism the chance to revamp their resumes, brush up on their job interview skills, learn to dress for success, and meet with more than 40 potential employers, veterans organizations and government agencies.

Wounded warriors from Charlie Company, the Fort Dix medical-holdover unit, as well as Soldiers from the Massachusetts and Virginia branches of the Army's Community Based Health Care Organization (CBHCO) program, were the honored guests. Charlie Company was also responsible for a majority of planning for the event at Fort Dix.

"This career fair is a huge event," said Lt. Gen. Robert Wilson, assistant chief of staff for installation management and commanding general, Installation Management Command. "I urge each of you to take advantage of the resources we have here today. Each of you chose to wear the American Flag on your right shoulder. I deeply appreciate and have deep respect for what you do for your country. We're committed to you."

Wilson kicked off the event's second day with an address to the nearly 300 service members in attendance, but work had begun the day before to prepare these Soldiers and Airmen for their meetings with potential employers.

Those who attended Tuesday's technical workshop learned about social security and veterans' benefits, the Military One Source program, and how to dress for success. They were also offered the chance to create or fine-tune resumes with the aid of nearly 20 volunteers who lent their time and expertise in an effort to give these troops the best chance of making a good impression during Wednesday's career fair.

"I turned in my resume to a couple of places - my resume



FIRST STEP - Cpl. Matther Welch, Mass. CBHC, and his wife Diana, work during the resume writing workshop at the Hiring Heroes Job Fair for wounded and injured Soldiers held at Fort Dix Feb. 27 and 28. More than 300 Soldiers attended the event.

(Photo by Ed Mingin, Fort Dix Public Affairs Office)

that the job fair helped me to prepare," said Staff Sgt. Giovanna Moreno, who is currently attached to the Massachusetts CBHCO.

"Everybody here is so enthusiastic about taking care of Soldiers. It's fantastic," said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Nolan, a 26-year veteran currently attached to the Massachusetts CBHCO. "It restores my faith in the military."

Restoring Soldiers' faith is a big part of the Hiring Heroes program, according to Karen Hannah, supervisory human resources specialist with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Hiring Heroes program manager.

"I hope they gain a feeling someone's still watching out for them," said Hannah. "They've had training and experiences that someone in the private sector has never had. They have valuable skills they don't even realize they have."

More than 40 private-sector companies, veterans organizations and government organizations sent recruiters to the Hiring Heroes event, including IBM, Greyhound, Comcast Cable Communications, Commerce Bank, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the National Security Agency, Secret Service, New Jersey Department of Labor and the Central Intelligence Agency.

"They bring a lot to the table," said Amy Layton, Commerce Bank, regarding service members. "A large part of it is that they understand the meaning of teamwork."

"They volunteered to serve our country. That says a lot about their character," added Sgt. Kelley Warner, Abington Township Police Department. "The military brings a sense of structure...it's easier for them to adjust."

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The Fort Dix Hiring Heroes job fair marks the eighth such event, with fairs held previously at Fort Sam Houston, Fort Bragg, Fort Gordon and Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

“I was at Walter Reed when they had their career fair,” explained Sgt. Maj. William Clark, Fort Dix medical liaison for Walter Reed and former Charlie Company first sergeant. Clark invited many of the Soldiers from Charlie Company to come from Fort Dix to Walter Reed to participate in that previous Hiring Heroes event, which led to the determination that Dix could use a job fair of its own.

“The support here on Fort Dix has been fantastic,” said Hannah. “Anything we ask for, they’re there.”

Team Dix was also committed to helping Soldiers at the Hiring Heroes event. Tables were set up at which service members could talk to representatives from post organizations such as finance, legal, personnel, chapel, Army Community Service, medical, and case management. Billeting was provided when possible, and transportation was offered to those who needed to visit offices on post.

According to the Pentagon, approxi-



THANKS - Lt. Gen Robert Wilson, Army assistant chief of staff for installation management and commanding general, Installation Management Command, accepts a carnation from Gold Star Mother Mary Conboy, whose son Lance Cpl. Adam Conboy was killed in Iraq May 12. Conboy came to the Hiring Heroes Job Fair at Fort Dix Feb. 28 to hand out flowers of appreciation to the more than 300 wounded Soldiers seeking jobs.

(Photo by Ed Mingin, Fort Dix Public Affairs Office)

mately 1,000 wounded warriors have obtained jobs through the Hiring Heroes program; Planners for the Fort Dix event are taking a less quantitative approach to

assessing the event’s value.

“If the Soldiers are happy with it, it’s a success.”